

4. Deep Fun

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Abstract:

Nietzsche advanced a sustained criticism of the common religious belief that we must suffer through the present life in order to receive a pay-off in the next. We see the same "future-pay-off" mentality in education due to the instrumental approach to pedagogy, which is also standard in the philosophy for children tradition. I argue that we ought to make a concerted effort to promote intrinsic value in education instead. A.S. Neill, founder of the famous "free school" Summerhill, shows that play is intrinsically valuable and logically prior to the work of learning. Children enjoy engaging in spontaneous activities that don't ultimately matter, especially if they provide humor, wonder, awe, insight, or community. The philosophical novel, when written, taught, or read playfully, has potential to furnish this intrinsic value, thereby offering a promising way of seizing the moment in education.

Keywords:

Friedrich Nietzsche; A.S. Neill; philosophical novel; play; intrinsic value